

# Coins and Computers

## NEWSLETTER

No. 11, June 1998

### INTERNATIONAL NUMISMATIC COMMISSION

Commission Internationale de Numismatique – Internationale Numismatische Kommission

#### ■ THE SESAM PROJECT AT THE ROYAL COIN CABINET IN STOCKHOLM

##### Background

In 1995 the Royal Coin Cabinet received 1 million SEK from the Government to accomplish the following tasks:

1. Reorganization of parts of the collections
2. Registration of the coins in a database together with digital pictures
3. Replacing old coin envelopes with new ones (acid-free)

This was part of a large nationwide project called SESAM. The main idea was to make an inventory of the Swedish museum collections while providing work for unemployed graduates in the humanities.

The project began on July 1, 1997. It was supposed to end a year later, but due to various circumstances it was prolonged until the middle of November 1998. Three persons, former students of Kenneth Jonsson, Ulrika Bornestaf, Nanouschka Myrberg and Richard Kjellgren, were employed by the Royal Coin Cabinet. All three of us had previously been working with the new exhibitions at the museum. Because of this, we were familiar with the collections. This experience and our knowledge of computerization of coins (at the Stockholm Numismatic Institute) was of great help in our work.

We have, so far, completed the following:

1. Reorganization of parts of the collection
2. Setting up a database with digital pictures:
  - a. 17,461 Swedish coins from the systematic collection
  - b. the entire systematic collection of Roman Republican coins (1,305)
  - c. 3,990 Roman Imperial coins from the systematic collection
  - d. the entire systematic collection of Early Nordic coins (520)
  - e. 1,679 Danish coins from the systematic collection

Replacing the old coin envelopes with new acid-free ones will be done this autumn.

##### The environment

The Royal Coin Cabinet has had the opportunity to invest in new computers. Today there are

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no PCs with less than 48 MB RAM and all have Pentium-processors. We use Windows NT 4.0 as the server OS and NT 3.51 as the client OS. There have been no particular problems during the implementation of our database-system (which today is quite simple). At the beginning of the project the Royal Coin Cabinet was offered a programmer, Lars Göran Lantz, from the employment office. Due to his experience and knowledge we used Borland Paradox. Today we are in the process of upgrading to InterBase which is another Borland product (INPRISE since they changed their name this year). At the same time we are also developing Delphi applications instead of using Paradox databases interactively. Along with this we have formed the basic outline for tables containing all other objects of the musem (tokens, medals, paper money, art etc). When the system is complete we will have access to all parts of the database through a main window.

### **Users**

The coin database is principally designed for members of the staff and will partly be available to guest researchers. Sometime in the future, some of the information may be presented on the World Wide Web.

### **Structure of the database and programming**

The coin database today consists only of one table with 40 fields, a file catalogue (for graphics), several forms and dialoge-boxes. Most fields are alpha-numeric and some are just numeric, date or memo-fields. Most of the programming in Paradox we had to do ourselves since the programmer ended his employment in November 1997. Fortunately, programming in ObjectPal is not very complicated. The programming of the Delphi-application is being done by Oscar Törnqvist, a freelancing consultant.

### **Interface for the database**

In Paradox you usually work with forms in one way or another. This gives you the opportunity to add some quite desirable features to your work environment, such as a custom-made button for copying records (without copying the ID-number). We have also been able to choose different ways of presenting the order of the fields in ways that suit each of us. After the upgrading to a real Client/Server-system it will, of course, be more static. We seldom work in table view except when correcting larger amounts of data and when we use the query function for reports. In the future it will be possible to use different kinds of report programs, like Chrystal Reports or Report Smith.

### **Digital pictures**

At the beginning the plan was to use an old digital videocamera for the digital pictures. That would have enabled us to take a picture of only one coin at a time. Instead we were able to buy a simple flatbed scanner (UMAX). This increased the speed to at least 30 coins a picture. We use the program Paint Shop Pro together with Vista Scan, a user friendly combination. The technique is quite simple. First we scan the obverse and then the reverse of the coins; thereby obtaining a picture with approximately 30-40 coins which we cut into individual pictures. The cutting process also involves saving the pictures. In order to save disc space we decided to save the pictures in JPG-format. Every picture is named in accordance to its ID-number, for example 101647a.jpg. The resolution of the pictures are only 150 dpi. These pictures are not intended for publishing but for on screen viewing and documentation. However they could be used for ordinary newspaper printing.



## Security

It is not possible to access the database without a personal password. The default for members of the staff is set to Read and Write. Guests will have their own password but will not be able to see where the coins are located in the vault and the default is set to Read Only.

## Backup system

We use a backup system called ARCserve Manager provided by Cheyenne which runs automatically once a week. During the registration we usually complete an average of c. 100 coins per day per person which is why we take an extra backup daily. To do this we use an Iomega Zip drive.

*Ulrika Bornestaf and Richard Kjellgren*

## ■ COMPUTER SURVEY (5)

Starting in 1993 a questionnaire was sent out to museums and institutions asking for information about databases. The answers have been presented in four surveys published in CCN 1-4. This time the survey will cover the remaining countries (Europe except Germany which was covered in survey no. 3). It should be pointed out that much of the information presented below has been updated this year. From the updated figures it is evident that the size of the databases has grown rapidly during the last few years. The survey below shows the information on a country by country basis for each institution where private databases are listed at the end.

### Austria

Wien, Institut	DOS	1,200	ASKSAM
Wien, Münzkabinett	DOS	15,000	NUMIZ

### Belgium

Brussels	Win95	23,000	dBase
Tongeren	DOS	?	Planned

### Croatia

Zagreb	DOS	5,100	NUMIZ
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### Denmark

KMMS	Win95	-	Access/NYGENREG (planned)
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### Estonia

Tallinn	Win95	7,000	Paradox
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### Finland

Helsinki	Win	-	Paradox (temporary)
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### France

Orleans	Mac	15,000	File Maker, 4th Dimension
Paris	Bull	21,000	BN-OPALINE
Depeyrot	DOS	?	dBase

### Greece

Athens	Mac	?	dBase
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### Hungary

Budapest	DOS	2,000	DATAEase
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### Italy

Bologna	Mac	2,800	FileMaker
Catania	DOS	5,000	dBase, Clipper

Livorno	DOS	1,700	dBase
Padova	DOS	10,000	dBase
Rome, Tor Vergata	DOS/Mac	?	dBase/Superbase
<b>Netherlands</b>			
Leiden	Mac	120,000	File Maker
Utrecht	DOS	1,050	TINREG
Amsterdam, Bank	DOS	?	FOCUS
<b>Norway</b>			
Oslo	Win95	120,000	Access
<b>Poland</b>			
Cracow, National Museum	DOS	?	dBase
Warszaw, National Museum	DOS	2,400	dBase/MONA
<b>Slovenia</b>			
Ljubljana	DOS	61,000	NUMIZ
<b>Spain</b>			
Barcelona, Cabinet Numism.	DOS	4,600	dBase
Madrid, Casa Moneda	IBM	80,000	TECTEL
Madrid, Museo Arqueologico	Win95	3,000	Access
Zaragoza	DOS	?	dBase/Paradox
<b>Sweden</b>			
Lund	Mac	25,000	FileMaker
Stockholm, Kungl. Myntkab.	NT	25,000	InterBase
Stockholm, Institute	Win95	170,800	dBase
Uppsala	DOS	1,000	dBase
<b>Switzerland</b>			
Basel	Win	?	dBase/GNOSARCH
Bern	Mac	?	FileMaker
Lausanne	DOS	70,000	
Neuchatel	DOS	?	?
Zürich, IFS	DOS	12,000	NAUSICAA
Zürich, Landesmuseum	Mac	?	?
<b>United Kingdom</b>			
Cambridge	Win 95	8,000	Access
Cardiff	DOS	2,500	Micromusée
Llantrisant, Royal Mint	DOS	?	Smartware
London	SCO UNIX	431,200	Universe/&MAGUS
Oxford	DOS	5,500	dBase
Ulster	DOS	330,210	QUIXIS
Volk	DOS	25,300	dBase/Paradox

More and more institutions use DOS/Win/Win95 as operating system, while Macintosh have lost ground. Where other systems are used it is often done in combination with Win/95 so that PCs can be used to access the material in the databases.

*Operating systems* (some use more than one system)

DOS/Win/95	Macintosh	NT	Unix	Other
34	8	1	1	2

Some institutions use more than one database program, but here we have tried to cover only the main programs used. dBase is still the favorite and although other programs are becoming more popular there is at present no clear runner up. However, in the long run Access will probably become the new favorite because of its increasing market share among database users in general and because new versions are being developed. Two out of three use standard programs, and NUMIZ is the only program specially designed for working with coins which is used at more than one institution.

*Database program (a few use more than one program)*

Access	dBase	FileMaker	NUMIZ	Paradox	Other
4	16	5	3	3	11

The databases usually cover material in collections where ancient coins are dominant. A large number of databases cover hoards and excavation finds and here too finds with ancient coins are the most common ones. It usually concerns the local finds. The databases are in many cases used to facilitate the publication of finds, where the number of coins involved makes it convenient to use computers. Although many of the databases primarily serve to help document collections they can of course be used for research as well.

*Categories*

General	Ancient	Middle Ages	Modern	Oriental	Finds	Notes	Medals
24	7	4	5	1	17	2	4

Europe has by far the greatest number of databases (in addition to the figures below there are 10 databases in Germany – see CCN 3) although the largest single database is that of ANS in New York (>500,000 entries – see CCN 4). The number of very large databases (>100,000 entries) has grown rapidly and this means that scholars now have access to a vast material.

*Number of records in databases (many have only just started)*

1-9,999	10,000-49,999	50,000-99,999	>100,000
15	9	3	5

More than half a dozen institutions use images in their databases.

There are no doubt numerous additional private databases of considerable size which are not listed here since a lot of the research done by students is based on material which is no longer kept on card indexis, but stored in databases at home.

*Kenneth Jonsson*

## ■ METAL DETECTING WEB SITES

Metal detecting has been both negative and positive when it comes to coin finds. In some countries a large number of recorded finds has for example made it possible to look at stray finds as evidence for coin circulation in a way which was previously not possible. In other countries metal detectorists have looted sites and sold their finds and the information about the finds have been lost. The laws regulating metal detecting also vary from one country to another and metal detecting may be banned altogether or require a license for each site.

Many museums have established contacts with individual metal detectorists or with clubs. Now there are also some web sites which thus can be interesting to keep an eye on to provide information or help to establish contacts. As usual most sites are located in USA. The sites are listed below. All sites are easily available if you visit the web site of the Metal Detecting Web Ring ([www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=ttracker;list;page=0](http://www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=ttracker;list;page=0))



**Australia**

[www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Rapids/5798/](http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Rapids/5798/)

**Canada**

[www.uoguelph.ca/~antoon/rcmc/rcmc.htm](http://www.uoguelph.ca/~antoon/rcmc/rcmc.htm)

**Italy**

[www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/6928/indice.html](http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/6928/indice.html)

**United Kingdom**

[www.angelfire.com/wa/detecdir/index.html](http://www.angelfire.com/wa/detecdir/index.html)  
[homepages.primex.co.uk/~fox30/index.html](http://homepages.primex.co.uk/~fox30/index.html)  
[freespace.virgin.net/trevor.austin/](http://freespace.virgin.net/trevor.austin/)  
[NCMDHomepage.htm](http://NCMDHomepage.htm)

**USA**

[lynx.dac.neu.edu/home/httpd/d/dlima/detect.htm](http://lynx.dac.neu.edu/home/httpd/d/dlima/detect.htm)  
[www.geocities.com/Baja/Dunes/7646/](http://www.geocities.com/Baja/Dunes/7646/)  
[www.gi.alaska.edu/~jesse/treasure/detector.html](http://www.gi.alaska.edu/~jesse/treasure/detector.html)  
[homepage.dave-world.net/~mccalip/](http://homepage.dave-world.net/~mccalip/)  
[www2.spindle.net/garren/](http://www2.spindle.net/garren/)  
[www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/6193//](http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/6193//)

[www.ultranet.com/~ontarget/](http://www.ultranet.com/~ontarget/)

[www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/4052/](http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Acropolis/4052/)  
[www.nettreasure.com/tether.html](http://www.nettreasure.com/tether.html)  
[www.enteract.com/~lyon/detect/](http://www.enteract.com/~lyon/detect/)  
[www.enteract.com/~lyon/detect/](http://www.enteract.com/~lyon/detect/)  
[www.mindspring.com/~wcs/searcher.htm](http://www.mindspring.com/~wcs/searcher.htm)  
[www.mindspring.com/~wcs/searcher.htm](http://www.mindspring.com/~wcs/searcher.htm)  
[www.frontiernet.net/~jvokes/detecting.htm](http://www.frontiernet.net/~jvokes/detecting.htm)  
[www.carlnet.org/~jahilt/index.htm](http://www.carlnet.org/~jahilt/index.htm)  
[www.2xtreme.net/ke6voq/elmyra.html](http://www.2xtreme.net/ke6voq/elmyra.html)  
[members.aol.com/desotogage/209.75.209.46/](http://members.aol.com/desotogage/209.75.209.46/)  
[members.aol.com/tinman456/index.html](http://members.aol.com/tinman456/index.html)  
[www.internet1.net/~dlclark/](http://www.internet1.net/~dlclark/)  
[www.internet1.net/~dlclark/](http://www.internet1.net/~dlclark/)  
[www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/4084/](http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/4084/)  
[members.xoom.com/NetSurfer/pioneer.html](http://members.xoom.com/NetSurfer/pioneer.html)  
[http://www.newbury.net/fid/html/fid.htm](http://http://www.newbury.net/fid/html/fid.htm)  
[members.aol.com/zoll529577/index.html](http://members.aol.com/zoll529577/index.html)

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C.N.R. Istituto per la Civiltà fenica e punica – [www.mlib.cnr.it/italian/bodies/ifp.html](http://www.mlib.cnr.it/italian/bodies/ifp.html)

**Japan**

Currency Museum, Bank of Japan – [www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm](http://www.imes.boj.or.jp/cm)

**Netherlands**

Teylers Museum – [nedpunt.nl/teylemuseum](http://nedpunt.nl/teylemuseum)

**Spain**

Museo Arqueológico Nacional – [www.man.es](http://www.man.es)

**Switzerland**

Cabinet des Médailles du Canton de Vaud – [www.lausanne.ch/musees/medaille.htm](http://www.lausanne.ch/musees/medaille.htm)

**United Kingdom**

Bank of England Museum – [www.bankofengland.co.uk/mus\\_arch.htm](http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/mus_arch.htm)

Manchester Museum – <http://www.mcc.ac.uk/Museum/numismatics/numis.htm>

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**■ EDITORIAL SECTION**

*CCN* (the acronym for the newsletter) is a semi-annual newsletter published in June and December. The aim is to provide information to all interested in numismatics who are also working with computers. The name of the newsletter has been chosen for convenience only and encompasses all branches of numismatics: coins, banknotes, medals, tokens etc. from ancient Greece to modern times. Current circulation is *c.* 300. *CCN* is supplied free of charge and distributed to all INC/CIN members and others interested.

We urge readers who have information, comments or questions to contribute which might be of interest to others to send it to us. Reports on computer activities at museums, institutions etc. are also welcome. Reviews of literature where computers have been adopted are also appreciated.

Contributions to *CCN* should preferably be delivered to one of the editors as ASCII, Word, Wordperfect or Pagemaker files via e-mail or on disk. The present editors regret that they can only use disks operating under the DOS/Windows system. However, contributions can also be delivered typed on paper. Contributions are accepted in English, French, and German. Proofs are not sent to the contributors.

*The editors welcome contributions to the next issue of CCN!*

## E-MAIL / HOME PAGE

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I want to receive the questionnaire about computers/databases ☐

. . ✂ . . . . .

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**I / We plan to arrange a conference on numismatics and data**

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Museum/institution: .....

Telephone: .....

Fax: .....

Subject(s): .....

Number of participants: .....

Location: .....

Date: .....

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Open to all interested?

Yes ☐

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